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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine and compare the literacy beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies; to explore the relationship among beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices; and to examine the degree to which beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices were dependent upon educators' demographic variables. The data were collected from 350 teachers through a survey. The data obtained were analyzed as follows: descriptive statistical analyses were performed to determine the distribution of respondents by demographic variables and total group and subgroup means of respondents' belief, knowledge base, and practice scores. The Mann Whitney U analysis and Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were performed to compare the beliefs, knowledge bases, and classroom practices of respondents. The relationships among beliefs, knowledge bases, and classroom practices were tested using the Spearman rank correlation analysis. Results strongly suggest that the instructional staff in Head Start programs are more likely than those in kindergarten and first grade to be emergent literacy oriented in their beliefs and practices concerning early literacy instruction and assessment, followed by teachers in first grade. The results further indicate teachers in kindergarten were consistently more reading readiness oriented in their beliefs and practices. The results also imply that teachers in first grade may have higher levels of familiarity with literacy terms compared to the kindergarten and Head Start instructional staff, and kindergarten teachers tend to have a higher degree of familiarity with major literacy theorists. Considering the results obtained in this area and the insignificant correlations between the measures of knowledge bases, instructional beliefs, and practices, it appears that there is little or no correlation between knowledge bases (as measured by familiarity with literacy terms and theorists) and the degree to which teachers are emergent literacy oriented in their literacy beliefs and practices. Contains 16 references and 5 tables of data. Survey instruments are appended. (Author/RS)

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The Relationships Among Early Childhood Educators' Beliefs, Knowledge Bases, and Practices Related To Early Literacy

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ABSTRACT
THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' BELIEFS, KNOWLEDGE BASES, AND PRACTICES RELATED TO EARLY LITERACY
by
Dr. Chhanda Islam
December, 1999

The study was conducted to determine and compare the literacy beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies; explore the relationship among beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices; and to examine the degree to which beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices were dependent upon educators' demographic variables. The data were collected from 350 teachers through a survey designed to ascertain their beliefs concerning early literacy instruction and assessment, knowledge bases, and practices. The data obtained were analyzed as follows: Descriptive statistical analyses were performed to determine the distribution of respondents by demographic variables and total group and subgroup means of respondents' belief, knowledge base, and practice scores. The Mann Whitney U analysis and Kruskal-Wallis One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were performed to compare the beliefs, knowledge bases, and classroom practices of respondents. The relationships among beliefs, knowledge bases, and classroom practices were tested using the Spearman rank correlation analysis. The alpha level of .05 was used as the criterion for accepting a difference or relationship as statistically significant.

The results of this study strongly suggest that the instructional staff in Head Start programs are more likely than those in kindergarten and first grade to be emergent literacy oriented in their beliefs and practices concerning early literacy instruction and assessment, followed by teachers in first grade. The results further indicate teachers in kindergarten were consistently more reading readiness oriented in their beliefs and practices. The results also imply that teachers in first grade may have higher levels of familiarity with literacy terms compared to the kindergarten and Head Start instructional staff, and kindergarten teachers tend to have a higher degree of familiarity with major literacy theorists. Considering the results obtained in this area and the insignificant correlations between the measures of knowledge bases, instructional beliefs and practices, it appears that there is little or no correlation between knowledge bases (as measured by familiarity with literacy terms and theorists) and the degree to which teachers are emergent literacy oriented in their literacy beliefs and practices.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The choices that teachers make about types of instruction and emphases in instructional programs are affected by their theoretical positions concerning the reading process. Some educators see reading as a set of subskills that children must master and integrate. They believe that, although good readers have learned and integrated these subskills so well that they use them automatically, beginning readers have not learned them all and may not integrate well those that they have learned. Teaching these skills until they become automatic and smoothly integrated is thus the approach these educators take to reading instruction. Some educators want students to be involved with authentic reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities, that is, activities that are not just contrived to teach particular skills but are designed to communicate. They advocate reading and writing whole pieces of literature, discussing these reading and writing experiences in class, and having students choose personally meaningfully reading and writing experiences. The whole language or emergent literacy philosophy, is a belief system, in which the teacher is an initiator and mediator of learning experiences, a kidwatcher, a liberator from constraints on learning, and a curriculum developer who links the curriculum to the learner.

Research on young children's development of reading and writing by William Teale (1987) revealed that many early childhood teachers accepted the new reading research which proposed that children learn literacy in an active, playful fashion. This

approach toward teaching has been embraced by teachers of young children for many years and supported by the emergent literacy research. This approach indicated that children developed an understanding of written language through daily encounters with functional usage of print (Goodman & Goodman, 1979; Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1982). Print becomes the dominant focus which includes comprehension and construction of meaning (Goodman & Goodman, 1981). According to Bissex (1980), print knowledge is learned through the active processes of constructing and testing hypotheses concerning written language and through the social interactions children enjoy as they engage in literacy events with teachers.

Reading readiness evolved from the belief that readiness is largely the result of maturation to the present-day conception that children benefit from instructional experiences before engaging in reading. Although early proponents of reading readiness contended that children must reach a certain level of physical, mental, and emotional maturity to profit from teaching, there has been a dramatic shift from a maturational perspective to an instructional emphasis.

During the past 3 decades there has been a momentous social and cultural push in America toward formal reading instruction. As a result, beginning instruction has focused on the prereading skills young children need to learn in order to read. The prevailing thought behind formal instruction is that young children need not wait for a best time to benefit from instruction if the instructional program is carefully designed. Young children can be taught the prerequisite skills necessary to learn to read through carefully sequenced instruction.

In the 1970s, the reading readiness skills perspective was met with a "unified challenge" (Teale & Sulzby, 1986b, p. xiv). Reading research over the past 2 decades has gradually led to the conclusion that the reading readiness skills model has become theoretically and practically inadequate for studying how young children become literate (Reutzel & Cooter, 1996). The term emergent literacy represents a philosophy that signifies the profound change that has taken place in the study and articulation of early literacy.

In regard to the role of language development, the use of literature, the literacy environment, and methods of assessment, it is important to discover the relationships between teachers' beliefs about these philosophies and the ways in which teachers implement their beliefs (Harste et al., 1982).

The classroom teacher establishes the environment in which he or she teaches reading to students; this includes developing a teaching style, such as lecture or cooperative learning, as well as developing an underlying pedagogical philosophy, such as reading readiness or emergent literacy. What one teaches is often dictated by a set of curriculum or established goals, but the method used to teach the curriculum or reach the established goals is chosen by the teacher, based on his or her belief system concerning instruction (DeFord, 1985).

Teachers' perceptions of learning continue to receive increasing attention in research as a result of their significant influence on classroom practices. Harste and Burke (1977) proposed that a particular teacher's knowledge bases and belief system about reading provide the foundation from which decisions about reading instruction emanate,

thus linking a teacher's theoretical orientation to reading with goals, procedures, and patterns of interaction in the classroom. In concordance with Harste and Burke (1977), Bondy (1990) stated that a teacher's beliefs and knowledge bases about reading and reading instruction, even if tacit and unexamined, influence instruction. These instructional choices greatly affect the way children are educationally impacted. Teachers' beliefs and the resulting courses of action teachers have taken in their classrooms are the subjects investigated in this study.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine the relationships among philosophical orientations, beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators in Mississippi concerning early literacy instruction and assessment.

Purpose of the Study

The specific purpose of the study was to determine and compare the beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies and to examine the relationships among beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What descriptive differences exist in beliefs concerning early literacy instruction and assessment of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies?

2. What descriptive differences exist in the knowledge bases concerning early literacy instruction and assessment of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies?

3. What descriptive differences exist in practice concerning early literacy instruction and assessment of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies?

4. Is there any relationship among teachers' beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices?

5. To what extent are teachers' beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices related to the teacher variables of age, gender, race, level of education, areas of undergraduate/graduate studies, years of experience, and school setting (urban, suburban, and rural)?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There will be no significant difference between the beliefs concerning early literacy instruction of educators' who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.

2. There will be no significant difference between the beliefs concerning early literacy assessment of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.

3. There will be no significant difference between educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies in terms of degree of familiarity with selected literacy terms.

4. There will be no significant difference between educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies in terms of familiarity with major theorists associated with different perspectives of early literacy.

5. There will be no significant difference between the literacy instructional practices of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.

6. There will be no significant difference between the literacy assessment practices of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.

7. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy instruction and familiarity with major theorists associated with different early literacy perspectives.

8. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy assessment and familiarity with major theorists associated with different early literacy perspectives.

9. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy instructions and their reported classroom instructional practices.

10. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy assessment and their reported literacy assessment practices.

11. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' familiarity with literacy terms and instructional practices.

12. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' familiarity with major theorists and instructional practices.

13. There will be no significant relationship between teachers' familiarity with major theorists and literacy assessment practices.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study utilized a descriptive and correlational design. It involved administering a survey developed to three groups of early childhood educators within the state of Mississippi–Head Start, kindergarten, and first-grade. The purpose of the study was to determine and compare the beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies and to examine the relationships among beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices.

In an attempt to add to the collected knowledge in the field of early childhood, the objectives of this survey study were to (a) obtain data on the way early childhood educators practice early literacy instruction and assessment; (b) add to the present conceptual framework in the field of early childhood education a survey of the beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators concerning early literacy instruction and assessment; (c) provide early childhood educators at the postsecondary level additional information concerning evaluations of the early literacy instruction and

assessment practices as they relate to the beliefs and knowledge bases of early childhood educators in the field; and (d) give early childhood educators an analysis of the field in regard to early literacy instruction and assessment.

Subjects

A sample of practitioners was systematically selected from early childhood educators working with children in Head Start, kindergarten, and first-grade in public schools in Hinds County, Mississippi. The names and school addresses of all of the kindergarten and first-grade teachers in Hinds County were obtained from the Mississippi Department of Education. The sample of kindergarten and first-grade teachers surveyed was selected systematically from the list of the Mississippi Department of Education. Directors of Head Start programs were contacted as to how many educators worked in their program. Surveys for the appropriate number of educators were then sent to the Head Start program. All practitioners at each selected program were then surveyed.

Procedure for Collecting Data

The data for this study were collected with the use of questionnaires (Survey of Early Childhood Practitioners Regarding Early Literacy Instruction and Assessment, Beliefs, Knowledge Base, Teachers' Practice) developed by Marley (1995). A letter was written to Marley requesting permission to use the early childhood educators' questionnaires.

A total of 400 survey instruments were distributed to selected school districts and Head Start programs. A cover letter was sent with the early childhood educators' questionnaire. The letter included an explanation of the purpose of the study and

information concerning completion of the questionnaire. Subjects were informed that confidentiality was assured. Subjects were given an opportunity to request the results of the study. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was provided to facilitate return. The responses were coded to allow for a follow-up mailing 6 weeks after the initial mailing; a master list of the survey code numbers was used to identify which surveys remained unreturned. A follow-up letter was sent to the identified respondents who were contacted but had not returned the surveys. One month after the final mailing, no further inquiries were made of the respondents. To promote confidentiality, the list of code numbers used to match surveys and respondents were then destroyed.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Introduction

This study was conducted to (a) determine and compare the literacy beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of early childhood educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies; (b) explore the relationship among beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices; and (c) examine the degree to which beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices were dependent upon educators' demographic variables. The data for the study were collected with a self-report questionnaire. The data obtained were analyzed as follows: Descriptive statistical analyses were performed to determine the distribution of respondents by demographic variables and total group and subgroup means of respondents' belief, knowledge base, and practice scores. The Mann Whitney U analysis and Kruskal-Wallis One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were performed to compare the beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of respondents. The relationships among beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices were tested using the Spearman rank correlation analysis. The alpha level of .05 was used as the criterion for accepting a difference or relationship as statistically significant.

Research Subjects

Four hundred teachers and assistant teachers were surveyed to collect the data for this study. Three hundred and fifty surveys were returned (return rate = 87.5%). Of this number, 120 (34.3%) were from Head Start teachers and assistants, 102 (29.1%) were from kindergarten teachers and assistant teachers, and 128 (36.6%) were from first grade teachers and assistant teachers. The distribution of respondents by gender, race, age and school setting is presented in Table 1. Information concerning respondents' education and job status is provided in Table 2. As reflected in the tables, the majority of respondents were female (96.9%), Black (75.7%), between the ages of 31-50 years (69.7%), and located in urban schools (71.1%). Approximately 43 percent had educational qualifications below the baccalaureate, about 39 percent held a bachelors degree, and approximately 18 percent had a graduate degree. About 56 percent of the respondents had early childhood education as a major or minor area of study in college, and approximately 29 percent were elementary majors. Teachers in Head Start, Kindergarten, and first grade classrooms comprised approximately 70 percent of the respondent pool. Of the total 350 respondents, 54 percent had taught for 10 years or less and 46 percent had over 10 years of teaching experience.

Respondents Beliefs about Literacy Assessment and Instruction, Knowledge Bases, and Classroom Practices

Beliefs About Instruction and Assessment

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed with seven statements of beliefs/opinions about early literacy instruction and 13 statements of

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Gender, Race, Age, and School Setting

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Male	11	3.1
Female	339	96.9
Race		
Black	265	75.7
White	85	24.3
Age		
21-30	72	20.6
31-40	128	36.6
41-50	116	33.1
School Setting		
Urban	249	71.1
Rural	18	5.1
Suburban	83	23.7

Table 2
Respondents' Educational Background and Job Status

Variable	N	%
Level of Education		
High School	82	23.4
Associate Degree	69	19.7
Bachelor's Degree	137	39.1
Master's Degree	47	13.4
Specialist Degree	14	4.0
Doctorate	1	.3
Area of Study In College		
Early Childhood Major	183	52.3
Early Childhood Minor	12	3.4
Elementary Education	103	29.4
Special Education	3	.9
Other	49	14.0
Present Position		
Head Start Teacher	80	22.9
Kindergarten Teacher	69	19.7
First Grade Teacher	95	27.1
Head Start Teacher	40	11.4
Kindergarten Asst. Teacher	33	9.4
First Grade Asst. Teacher	33	9.4
Years of Experience in Teaching		
5 or less years	115	32.9
6-10 years	74	21.1
11-15 years	75	21.4
16-20 years	46	13.1
21-25 years	18	5.1
Over 25	22	6.3

beliefs/ opinions about literacy assessment on a 5-point scale, with 1= "Strongly Disagree", 2= "Disagree", 3= "Neutral", 4= "Agree", and 5= "Strongly Agree." The numerical values associated with the responses provided by each respondent to the statements about literacy instruction and assessment were added and averaged to obtain his/her instructional belief score and assessment belief score, respectively. Prior to the computation of scores, responses were recoded so that higher scores would indicate higher levels of emergent literacy orientation. The results of the descriptive analysis performed to determine the average scores relative to respondents' beliefs about literacy instruction and assessment are given in Table 3. As indicated in the table, the means obtained are in the range of 3, indicating that the respondents, as a group, were about equally emergent literacy and reading readiness oriented in their beliefs about literacy instruction and assessment.

Familiarity with Terms and Theorists

Respondents' degree of familiarity with literacy terms and theorists associated with different perspectives of early literacy was determined by computing the number terms (n=30) and theorists (n=15) indicated by respondents as familiar. As given in Table 3, the average of the number of terms identified by respondents is 21.01 (about two-thirds of the number presented), indicating that the respondents, as a group, had an above average familiarity with the literacy terms. The average of the number of theorists identified as familiar is 5.69 (about one-third of the number listed in the survey), indicating a relatively low degree of familiarity (see Table 3).

Table 3

Group Mean Scores on Research Variable

Variable	Mean	SD
Instructional Belief	3.12	1.25
Assessment Belief	3.12	1.05
Familiar Terms	21.01	7.14
Familiar Theorists	5.69	2.65
Instructional Practice	3.23	1.11
Assessment Practice	3.18	1.07

Instructional and Assessment Practices

In the last section of the survey instrument used in this study, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they conducted 14 literacy instructional activities and four assessment activities in the classroom on a 5-point scale, with 1= "Almost Never/Not at All" and 5= " Very Often/ To a Very Great Extent." The same procedures used to derive and analyze respondents' belief scores were applied to the responses obtained in these two areas. The results obtained are also given in Table 3. As presented in the table, the means of respondents instructional and assessment practice scores are in

the range of 3, indicating that the respondents as a group, conducted emergent literacy-type activities in the classroom at about the same rate they conducted reading readiness-type activities.

Comparison of Beliefs, Knowledge Bases, and Practices of Teachers with Emergent Literacy and Reading Readiness Philosophies

Two opposing statements, "reading readiness is my primary philosophy" and "emergent literacy is my primary philosophy", were included in the survey instrument for the purpose of identifying the early literacy philosophy espoused by respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed with each statement on the five-point scale of 1= "Strongly Disagree", 2= "Disagree", 3= "Neutral", 4= "Agree", and 5= "Strongly Agree." Preliminary analysis of data showed that 41 respondents indicated "Neutral" as a response, 113 strongly agreed or agreed with both statements, and 2 strongly disagreed or disagreed with both statements. The data for these respondents (n=156) were excluded from the analysis reported in this section.

The responses for the remaining 294 were recoded as follows: "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" were coded as "Agree", and "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" were coded as "Disagree." Respondents who agreed that reading readiness was their philosophy and disagreed that emergent literacy was their philosophy were designated as teachers who espouse reading readiness philosophy (n=89); those who agreed that emergent literacy was their philosophy and disagreed that reading readiness was their philosophy were designated as teachers who espouse emergent literacy philosophy (n=105). The report that follows provides the results of the analyses performed to test the six hypotheses of no

difference between the beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices of teachers who espouse reading readiness and emergent literacy philosophies.

> Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference between the beliefs concerning early literacy instruction of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.

As given in Table 4, the teachers who identified emergent literacy as their primary philosophy had higher instructional belief scores (M=4.47) than those who identified reading readiness as their philosophy (M=1.61). The Mann-Whitney U analysis performed to compare the scores for the two groups showed that the instructional belief scores for teachers who espoused emergent literacy philosophy were significantly higher that the scores for those who espoused reading readiness, $p<.05$ (See Table 4). Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was rejected. The higher instructional belief scores computed for teachers who identified emergent literacy as their philosophy indicate that these teachers were more emergent literacy oriented in their beliefs concerning literacy instruction.

Table 4

Results of Comparison of Scores for Respondents with Reading Readiness and Emergent Literacy Philosophies on Six Research Variables

Variable/ Espoused Philosophy	N	Mean	Mean Ranks	U	z	p
Instructional Belief						
Reading Readiness	89	1.61	46.51			
				134.0	11.69	<.0001
Emergent Literacy	105	4.47	140.72			
Assessment Belief						
Reading Readiness	89	1.80	46.12			
				100.0	11.75	<.0001
Emergent Literacy	105	4.32	141.05			
Familiarity with Terms						
Reading Readiness	89	23 10	104.94			
				4010.0	1.71	.0881
Emergent Literacy	105	22.41	91.19			
Familiarity with Theorists						
Reading Readiness	89	6.70	99.03			
				4536.5	.35	.7248
Emergent Literacy	105	6.68	96.20			
Instructional Practice						
Reading Readiness	89	1.83	45.56			
				50.0	11.90	<.0001
Emergent Literacy	105	4.48	141.52			
Assessment Practice						
Reading Readiness	89	2.06	48.20			
				284.5	11.50	<.0001
Emergent Literacy	105	4.10	139.29			

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference between the beliefs concerning early literacy assessment of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.

The means of the assessment belief scores computed for teachers who identified emergent literacy and reading readiness as their primary philosophies are provided in Table 4. As indicated in the table, teachers with emergent literacy philosophy had higher scores (M=4.32) than those with reading readiness philosophy (M=1.80). The results of the Mann Whitney U analysis conducted to compare the assessment belief scores for the two groups indicated that the scores for teachers who espoused emergent literacy philosophy were significantly higher that the scores for those with reading readiness philosophy, $p<.05$ (See Table 4). Based on the results obtained, the hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was rejected. The higher assessment belief scores obtained for teachers who espoused emergent literacy philosophy imply that these teachers were more emergent literacy oriented than those with reading readiness philosophy, in terms of beliefs concerning early literacy assessment.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant difference between educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophy in terms of degree of familiarity with selected literacy terms.

As indicated in Table 4, the teachers with reading readiness philosophy identified a slightly higher number (M=23.10) of literacy terms as familiar compared to those who espoused emergent literacy philosophy (M=22.41), on the average. The results of the Mann Whitney U analysis performed to compare the scores for the two groups indicate that the difference was not statistically significant, $p>.05$ (See Table 4). Therefore, the

hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups in terms of familiarity with literacy terms was accepted.

> Hypothesis 4: There will be no significant difference between educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies in terms of familiaritywith major theorists associated with different perspectives of early literacy.

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that there was only slight difference in the numbers of theorists identified as familiar by teachers who espoused emergent literacy (M=6.70) and reading readiness (M=6.68) philosophies. As indicated by the results of the Mann Whitney U test performed to compare the number identified by the two groups, the difference was not statistically significant, $p>.05$ (See Table 4). Therefore, the hypothesis of no difference between the two groups was accepted.

> Hypothesis 5: There will be no significant difference between the literacy instructional practices of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.

As indicated in Table 4, the teachers who identified emergent literacy as their primary philosophy had higher instructional practice scores (M=4.48) than those who identified reading readiness as their philosophy (M=1.83), on the average. The Mann Whitney U analysis performed to compare the scores of the two groups showed that the difference was statistically significant, $p<.05$ (See Table 4). Based on the results obtained, the hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was rejected. The higher instructional practice scores computed for teachers who espoused emergent literacy philosophy imply that these teachers were more likely to implement emergent literacy-type instruction in their classrooms.

Hypothesis 6: There will be no significant difference between the literacy assessment practices of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies.

The means of the assessment practice scores obtained for groups of teachers who espoused emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies are given in Table 4. As indicated there, the assessment practice scores for teachers who identified emergent literacy as their philosophy (M=4.10) were higher than the scores for those who espoused reading readiness philosophy (M= 2.06). The results of the Mann Whitney U analysis performed to compare the scores for the two groups indicated that the difference was statistically significant, $p<.05$ (See Table 4). Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was rejected. The higher assessment practice scores obtained for the teachers who espoused emergent literacy indicate that these teachers were more likely to practice emergent literacy oriented assessment methods in their classrooms.

Relationship between Teachers' Beliefs, Knowledge Bases, and Practices

The second major objective of this study was to determine the degree of relationship among teachers' beliefs concerning early literacy instruction and assessment, familiarity with literacy terms and major theorists, and classroom instruction and assessment practices. To achieve this objective, seven null hypotheses were tested utilizing Spearman correlational analysis. The results of the correlational analysis are provided in Table 5.

Table 5

Intercorrelations Among Six Research Variables

	Beliefs about Instruction	Beliefs about Assessment	Familiarity with Theorists	Familiarity with Terms	Instructional Practice	Assessment Practice
Beliefs about Instructions	-					
Beliefs about Assessments	.95*	-				
Familiarity with Theorists	.04	.04	-			
Familiarity with Terms	.11	.05	.60*	-		
Instructional Practice	.89*	.92*	.01	.04	-	
Assessment Practice	.74*	.78*	.07	.09	.81*	-

*p<.001

Hypothesis 7: There will be no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy instruction and familiarity with major theorists associated with different early literacy perspectives.

The analysis conducted to examine the degree of relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy instruction and familiarity with theorists yielded a statistically insignificant correlation coefficient, $r=.04$, $p>.05$ (See Table 5). On the basis of the results obtained, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between the two variables was accepted.

Hypothesis 8: There will be no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy assessment and familiarity with major theorists associated with different early literacy perspectives.

As indicated in Table 5, the results of the analysis performed to determine the degree of relationship between teachers' beliefs about literacy assessment and familiarity with theorists yielded a very small, statistically insignificant correlation coefficient, $r=.04$, $p>.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between the two variables was accepted.

Hypothesis 9: There will be no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy instruction and classroom instructional practices.

The results of the analysis performed to examine the degree of relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy instruction and classroom instructional practices show that the two variables were significantly correlated, $r=.89$, $p<.05$ (See Table 5). Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between the two variables was rejected. The positive correlation coefficient (.89) obtained indicates that

teachers with higher instructional beliefs scores had higher instructional practice scores. This means that higher levels of emergent literacy-type instructional practices are more likely to occur in the classrooms of the teachers with emergent literacy oriented instructional beliefs.

Hypothesis 10: There will be no significant relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy assessment and their reported literacy assessment practices.

As presented in Table 5, the analysis of the relationship between teachers' beliefs concerning literacy assessment and assessment practices revealed that the two variables were significantly correlated, $r=.78$, $p<.05$. Thus the hypothesis of no significant relationship between the two variables was rejected. The positive correlation coefficient (.78) obtained indicates that teachers with higher beliefs scores also had higher practice scores. That is, the more emergent literacy oriented the teacher's beliefs the more likely the teacher is to conduct emergent literacy-type assessment approaches.

Hypothesis 11: There will be no significant relationship between teachers' familiarity with literacy terms and instructional practices.

The results of the analysis conducted to explore the relationship between teachers' familiarity with literacy terms and instructional practices revealed no significant correlation between the two variables, $r=-.04$, $p>.05$ (See Table 5). Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between the two variables was accepted.

Hypothesis 12: There will be no significant relationship between teachers' familiarity with major theorists and instructional practices.

As presented in Table 5, the analysis performed to explore the relationship between teachers' familiarity with theorists and instructional practices revealed a very

small, statistically insignificant correlation coefficient, $r=.01$, $p>.05$. Based on the results obtained, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between the two variables was accepted.

> Hypothesis 13: There will be no significant relationship between teachers' familiarity with major theorists and literacy assessment practices.

The results of the analysis performed to examine the degree to which teachers' familiarity with theorists and assessment practices are related show that the correlation coefficient between the two variables is .07, and statistically insignificant, $p>.05$ (See Table 5). As a result, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between familiarity with theorists and assessment practices was accepted.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, data were collected from 350 teachers through a survey designed to ascertain their beliefs concerning early literacy instruction and assessment, knowledge bases, and classroom instructional practices. The data were analyzed as follows: The numerical values assigned to teachers' responses to survey items on beliefs and practices were used to derive instructional practice, and assessment practice scores for respondent. These scores were computed so that higher scores would indicate higher levels of emergent literacy orientation, and lower scores would indicate higher reading readiness orientation. The knowledge bases of teachers were assessed by computing the numbers of the literacy terms and theorists included in the survey that teachers identified as familiar. Statistical analyses were performed to (a) determine the prevalence of emergent literacy and reading readiness oriented beliefs and practices among the teachers; (b) compare the beliefs, knowledge bases, and classroom practices of teachers; and (c) examine the relationship among beliefs, knowledge bases, and classroom practices.

Summary of Major Findings

Beliefs Concerning Literacy Instruction

The descriptive analysis conducted to determine the instructional belief systems of all the teachers in this study showed that, overall, emergent literacy oriented and reading readiness oriented beliefs were about equally prevalent among the teachers. However, the

instructional beliefs were found to vary significantly by teachers' espoused philosophy, educational level, teaching position, years of experience, and school setting.

The analysis of the data for teachers who identified emergent literacy and reading readiness as their primary philosophies revealed that those who identified emergent literacy as their philosophy had significantly higher instructional belief scores. It was also found that teachers with an associate degree had instructional belief scores that were significantly higher than the scores for those with a masters degree and high school educational qualification. The comparison of the instructional belief scores for the subgroups of respondents formed on the basis of teaching position, revealed that Head Start teachers and assistant teachers had significantly higher scores than first grade and kindergarten teachers and assistant teachers. Teachers in suburban school were found to have instructional beliefs scores that were significantly higher than the scores for those in urban and rural schools. No significant difference was found in the scores computed for teachers in urban and rural schools. The instructional belief scores for teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience were found to be significantly higher than the scores for those with 6-25 years of experience. The analyses performed to compare instructional belief scores on the bases of teachers' sex, race, age, and area of study did not reveal any significant difference between the subgroups formed for each of the four variables.

Beliefs Concerning Literacy Assessment

The descriptive analysis conducted to examine the degree to which the beliefs of teachers were emergent literacy or reading readiness oriented showed that the belief systems of the teachers reflected emergent literacy and reading readiness positions, at or

about the same level. Nevertheless, teachers' beliefs concerning literacy assessment were found to vary significantly by espoused philosophy, sex, race, education, position, years of teaching experience, and school setting.

The means of the assessment belief scores obtained for the groups of teachers formed on the basis of espoused literacy philosophy showed that the teachers who identified emergent literacy as their primary philosophy had significantly higher scores than those who espoused reading readiness philosophy. The analyses conducted to compare assessment belief scores by teachers' gender and by race showed that male teachers and Black teachers had significantly higher scores than female teachers and white teachers, respectively.

Comparison of assessment belief scores by level of education revealed that teachers with an associate degree had scores that were significantly higher than the scores for those with high school, bachelors degree, and specialist degree qualifications. The scores for teachers with a specialist degree were also found to be higher than those for teachers with a masters degree.

The analysis of data obtained for the groups of teachers formed on the basis of area of study revealed that teachers with early childhood education as their major area of study had assessment belief scores that were significantly higher than the scores computed for elementary majors. The analysis conducted to compare the assessment belief scores for teachers by teaching position revealed that the teachers and assistant teachers in Head Start programs had significantly higher scores than kindergarten and first grade teachers and assistant teachers. First grade teachers were also found to have

significantly higher scores, compared to kindergarten and first grade assistant teachers. The comparison of the assessment belief scores for the groups of teachers formed on the basis of number of years of teaching experience showed that the teachers in the 0-5 years group had significantly higher scores than those with over 5 years of teaching experience. The analysis of the data by teachers' age did not reveal any statistically significant difference in assessment belief scores.

Familiarity with Terms

On the average, the teachers in this study reported that about two-thirds of the literacy terms presented in the survey were familiar terms. Subsequent analyses of data showed that the number of terms identified as familiar terms varied significantly on the bases of teachers' race, educational level, position, area of study, and school setting. The analysis of data revealed that the number of terms White teachers indicated were familiar was significantly larger than the number indicated by Black teachers, on the average.

The comparison conducted to compare the numbers of terms reported as familiar by teachers with different levels of education revealed that teachers with a specialist degree reported significantly larger numbers than those with either a high school, associate, bachelors, or masters degree. Teachers with a masters or a bachelors degree were also found to have indicated significantly larger numbers of terms than those who had a high school or an associate level of education, while the numbers indicated by teachers with an associate degree significantly surpassed the numbers reported by those with a high school level education.

With regards to area of study in college, elementary education majors were found

to have identified significantly larger numbers of terms as familiar, compared to those with early childhood education as a major or minor area of study. The pair-wise comparisons of the teacher subgroups formed on the basis of position revealed that the numbers of terms first grade teachers indicated were familiar were significantly larger than the numbers reported by Head Start teachers and assistant teachers as well as first grade and kindergarten assistant teachers. Kindergarten teachers were also found to have identified significantly larger numbers of terms as familiar, compared to Head Start teachers and assistant teachers as well as kindergarten and first grade assistant teachers. Analysis of data also revealed that the number of terms reported by teachers in urban schools, on the average, was significantly larger than the numbers reported by those in suburban schools. The separate analyses conducted to compare the numbers of familiar terms reported on the bases of espoused philosophy, sex, age, and teaching experience did not show any significant difference between the subgroups formed for each of the variables.

Familiarity with Literacy Theorist

On the average, the teachers in this study were able to identify approximately one-third of the theorists listed in the survey. The rate at which theorists were identified by the teachers was found to differ significantly on the bases of race, educational level, area of study, and teaching position.. Analysis of data showed that White teachers reported significantly larger numbers of theorists than Black teachers. The pair-wise analyses conducted to compare the numbers of familiar theorists reported by teachers with different levels of education revealed that (a) teachers with a specialist degree

significantly outscored all the other respondents, with the exception of those with a bachelors degree; (b) teachers with a bachelors degree significantly outscored those with masters, associate, and high school qualifications; (c) teachers with a masters degree significantly outscored those with high school qualification; and teachers with an associate degree reported significantly larger numbers than those with high school educational level.

In the analysis conducted to compare the numbers of theorists reported on the basis of area of study, it was found that the numbers of theorists reported by early childhood education majors were significantly larger than the numbers reported by elementary majors. The pair-wise analyses performed to compare the numbers of familiar theorists reported by groups of teachers formed on the basis of education showed that (a) kindergarten teachers reported significantly larger numbers than Head Start teachers and assistant teachers in Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade; (b) first grade teachers reported significantly larger numbers than Head Start teachers and assistant teachers at all of the three grade levels; and (c) Head Start teachers identified significantly larger numbers than Head Start, kindergarten, and first grade assistant teachers. The analyses conducted to compare the numbers of familiar theorists reported by the teacher subgroups formed on the bases of sex, age, experience, school setting, and espoused literacy philosophy did not yield a significant difference in any instance.

Instructional Practices

The descriptive analysis conducted to determine the orientation of teachers' instructional practices revealed that the teachers, overall implemented classroom

activities that were emergent literacy oriented at about the same rate they conducted reading readiness-type activities. Subsequent analysis of data, nevertheless, showed that the instructional practice scores obtained for the teachers varied significantly by sex, race, level of education, espoused philosophy, area of study in college, position, teaching experience, and school setting.. The analysis of data by sex revealed that the male teachers had significantly higher instructional practices scores, compared to the female teachers. The instructional practices scores computed for Black teachers were also found to be significantly higher than the scores for White teachers.

The analysis performed to examine the instructional practice scores for teachers with different levels of education revealed that the scores for the teachers with an associate degree were significantly higher than the scores computed for all other respondents. The scores for teachers with early childhood education as a major area of study were also found to be significantly higher than the scores obtained for elementary education majors. The pair-wise comparison of the teacher subgroups formed on the basis of position revealed that Head Start teachers and assistant teachers had instructional practice scores that were significantly higher than the scores computed for all the other groups of teachers. The analyses also showed that the scores for first grade teachers were significantly different from the scores for assistant teachers at the same school level. In this case, the scores for the teachers were higher.

With regards to years of teaching experience, the teachers who had taught for 5 years or less were found to have obtained instructional practice scores that were significantly higher than the scores computed for all the other subgroups formed on the

basis of experience. The teachers who identified emergent literacy as their primary philosophy, had significantly higher scores in comparison to those with reading readiness philosophy. The analyses performed to compare instructional practice scores by school setting revealed that the teachers in suburban schools scored significantly higher than those in urban and rural schools. The scores for teachers in rural schools were also found to be significantly higher than the scores for their colleagues in urban schools. No significant difference was found in the scores obtained for the subgroups of teachers formed on the basis of age.

Assessment Practices

The descriptive analysis conducted to examine the literacy assessment practices of teachers revealed that, overall, the teachers conducted emergent literacy and reading readiness oriented assessment activities at about the same rate. Nevertheless, the assessment practice scores computed for the teachers were found to vary significantly on the bases of age, area of study, philosophical orientation, teaching position, experience in teaching, and school setting. The teachers who identified emergent literacy as their primary philosophy were found to have significantly higher scores than those who identified with reading readiness. With regards to age, the teachers in the 21-30 years age-group scored significantly higher than the teachers in all the other age groups formed for the study.

The analyses performed to compare the assessment practice scores of teachers on the basis of area of study in college showed that those with early childhood education as a major had significantly higher scores than the elementary majors. The assessment

practice scores obtained for Head Start teachers and assistant teachers were found to be significantly higher than the scores for kindergarten teachers and assistant teachers in kindergarten and first grade. First grade teachers were also found to have significantly higher scores, compared to kindergarten teachers and assistant teachers.

With regards to years of teaching experience, the teachers with 5 years or less of experience were found to have received significantly higher assessment scores than those 6-20 years of experience. The assessment practice scores computed for the teachers in suburban schools were also found to be significantly higher than the scores for teachers in urban and rural schools. The analyses performed to compare the assessment practice scores for teachers in the subgroups formed on the bases of level of education, sex, and race did not reveal a significant difference in any instance.

Relationship Between Teachers' Beliefs, Knowledge Bases, and Practice

The correlational analysis conducted in the study revealed a significant, positive correlation (a) between the instructional belief and instructional practice scores and (b) between the assessment belief and assessment practice scores. The analyses performed to examine the degree of relationship between the numbers of familiar theorists reported by teachers and their instructional belief, assessment belief, instructional practice, and assessment practices scores did not yield a significant correlation coefficient in any instance.

Conclusions

What descriptive difference exist in beliefs concerning early literacy instruction

and assessment of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies? The hypothesis of no significant difference between instructional beliefs of the two groups of teachers was rejected in this study. The hypothesis of no significant difference in the assessment belief of the two groups was also rejected. The significantly higher instructional beliefs and assessment belief scores computed for teachers who identified emergent literacy as their primary philosophy suggests that teachers with this philosophical position tend to be more emergent literacy oriented in their beliefs concerning early literacy instruction and assessment.

What descriptive differences exist in the knowledge bases of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies? The hypotheses of no significant difference between the two groups' degree of familiarity with literacy terms was accepted in this study. The hypothesis of no difference between the two groups' degree of familiarity with major literacy theorists was also accepted.

What descriptive difference exist in practice concerning early literacy instruction and assessment of educators who espouse emergent literacy and reading readiness philosophies? The hypothesis of no significant difference in the instructional practices of the two groups of teachers was rejected in this study. The hypothesis of no difference in the assessment practices of the two groups was also rejected. The higher instructional practice and assessment practice scores obtained for the teachers who reported that emergent literacy was their primary philosophy indicate that teachers with this philosophical disposition tend to be more likely to conduct emergent literacy-type instructional and assessment activities in the classroom.

Is there any relationship among teachers' beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices? The hypotheses of no relationship between teachers' familiarity with major literacy theorists and (a) instructional beliefs, (b) assessment beliefs, (c) instructional practices, and (d) assessment practices were all accepted in this study. The hypothesis of no relationship between familiarity with terms and instructional practices was also accepted.

The hypothesis of no significant relationship between teachers' instructional beliefs and practices, and the hypothesis of no relationship between assessment beliefs and practices were both rejected. The significantly large, positive correlation coefficients found in the analyses conducted in this study imply that higher levels of emergent literacy-type instructional and assessment practices are more likely to occur in the classrooms of teachers with emergent literacy oriented beliefs concerning literacy instruction and assessment.

To what extent are teachers' beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices related to the teachers variables of age, gender, race, level of education, area of study in college, position, years of experience, and school setting? The results of this study strongly suggest that the instructional staff in Head Start programs are more likely than those in kindergarten and first grade to be emergent literacy oriented in their beliefs and practices concerning early literacy instruction and assessment, followed by teachers in first grade. The results further indicate teachers in kindergarten were consistently more reading readiness oriented in their beliefs and practices. The results also imply that teachers in first grade may have higher levels of familiarity with literacy terms compared to the kindergarten and Head Start instructional staff, and kindergarten teachers tend to have a

higher degree of familiarity with major literacy theorists. Apparently, their higher familiarity with theorists did not result in their being more emergent literacy oriented. Considering the results obtained in this area and the insignificant correlations between the measures of knowledge bases, instructional beliefs and practices, it appears that there is little or no correlation between knowledge bases (as measured by familiarity with literacy terms and theorists) and the degree to which teachers are emergent literacy oriented in their literacy beliefs and practices.

According to the results obtained in this study, it appears that teachers with an associate degree tend to be more emergent literacy oriented in their beliefs and practices concerning literacy instruction and beliefs about literacy assessment, compared to teachers with other levels of education. The results also imply that associate degree holders tend to have a lower level of familiarity with literacy terms and theorists than their colleagues with higher levels of education. Furthermore, the results of the study suggest that teachers who major in early childhood education tend to be more likely to emergent literacy oriented concerning literacy instruction and assessment. Taken together, the results obtained concerning the link between the level emergent literacy orientation of teachers and their educational preparation strongly suggest that teachers in associate degree programs and those undertake the study of early childhood education may be exposed more to principles and practices more in line with emergent literacy recommendations for promoting the literacy development of young children.

In this study, the most recent entrants to the field of teaching, that is teachers with less than 6 years of experience, were consistently found to be more emergent literacy

oriented in their beliefs as well as practices concerning literacy instruction and assessment. In general, the pool of new entrants to the teaching profession tend to be predominated by recent graduates of teacher preparation programs. If this is true in the case of the teachers in this study, the higher emergent literacy orientation observed among teachers with less than 6 years of experience may be an indication that teacher education programs are "now" placing more emphasis on the principles and practices in line with emergent literacy recommendations for literacy development than they did in the past decades.

Another consistent finding in this study is the higher emergent literacy orientation of the teachers in suburban schools in beliefs and practices concerning literacy instruction, compared to teachers in urban and rural schools. This finding may be associated with type of training provided to the teachers located in suburban schools, the educational philosophies promoted by schools in different settings or some other salient variables not addressed in this study.

Race was not found to be a consistent influential factor in beliefs, knowledge bases, and practices. Black teachers were found to be more emergent literacy oriented than White teachers in terms of beliefs concerning literacy assessment and instructional practices, but White teachers reported larger numbers of familiar terms and theorist than Black teachers. Gender was found to be an influential factor with regards to differences in assessment beliefs and instructional practices. In both cases, the males were found to be more emergent literacy oriented than females.

Several findings made in this study, especially with regards to teacher beliefs and

practices, seem to be highly consistent with the outcomes obtained in previous research studies. It was found in this study that the reading readiness philosophy is still a force to reckoned with as educators contemplate the most effective approaches for promoting the literacy development of young children. According to experts in the field, despite growing opposition to the theory of reading readiness, it has remained the most influential reading theory in the United States and is regarded as the traditional perspective (Mason, 1992; Smith, 1992). With regards to the relationships between beliefs and practices, Shavelson (1993) made the observation that research has shown that teachers were decision makers who processed information and acted upon these decisions. DeFord (1985) reported that "knowledge forms a system of beliefs and attitudes which direct perceptions and behaviors" (pp. 352-353). Harste and Burke (1977) also reported that teachers made instructional decisions in reading "in light of the theory or assumptions they held about reading and learning" (p. 33). The authors further proposed that "a teachers theoretical orientation established expectancies and influence goals, procedures, materials, and classroom interaction patterns" (p. 33).

Given the importance of the consistency of the relationship between beliefs and practices, as well as the qualitative differences in the effect of emergent literacy and reading readiness teaching philosophies and approaches, this study raises several questions about the nature of literacy experiences of many children in the schools that provided the subjects for this study. The relatively high rate at which teachers were found to endorse reading readiness philosophies and practices suggests that a significant number of children may be subjected to practices which research indicates may be less effective

than emergent literacy practices. The findings that Head Start teachers and first grade teachers were more emergent literacy oriented than kindergarten teachers pose serious ramifications for the continuity of experiences for children as they transition from Head Start into kindergarten, and from kindergarten to first grade. The findings that new entrants to the teaching profession may be more emergent literacy oriented than teachers with more extensive numbers of years of service suggest the need for a systematic action of staff development for teachers who have been in the field for a relatively longer period of time. In addition, this study does suggest the need to examine the specific factors related to the higher emergent literacy orientation found among teachers in different school settings and with different levels of education and areas of study.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in light of the findings of this study and in the review of the literature on early literacy development:

1. Studies should be conducted to determine factors responsible for the relatively high rate at which teachers endorse and practice reading readiness teaching approaches in the classroom.

2. Further analysis should be conducted to determine the degree to which the independent variables in this study, such as educational level, area of study, school setting, and other contextual variables interact to influence teachers' beliefs and practices concerning early literacy instruction.

3. This study utilized a self-report to generate the data analyzed to assess beliefs

and practices. Observational studies should be conducted to determine whether or not teacher-reported practices are congruent with their actual classroom practices.

4. The specific components of the type of educational training provided to associate degree holders that may be responsible for their higher emergent literacy orientation should be studied for possible incorporation into the programs that award bachelors and masters degrees.

5. Further studies should be conducted to replicate the present study using larger samples drawn from more diverse school settings, and a broader geographical region.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Teacher Questionnaire

Demographic Information

Directions: Please complete the following items by checking (X) the most appropriate response for each item and by providing information as requested.

1. **Age**
   _____1. 21-30
   _____2. 31-40
   _____3. 41-50
   _____4. Over 50

2. **Gender**
   _____1. Male
   _____2. Female

3. **Race**
   _____1. African American/Black
   _____2. White/Non-Hispanic
   _____3. American Indian
   _____4. Hispanic-American
   _____5. Other (Specify)
   _____

4. **Highest Level of Education**
   _____1. High School
   _____2. Associate Degree
   _____3. Bachelor's Degree
   _____4. Master's Degree
   _____5. Specialist's Degree
   _____6. Doctoral Degree

5. **Present Position**
   _____1. Head Start Teacher
   _____2. Kindergarten Teacher
   _____3. First Grade Teacher
   _____4. Head Start Assistant Teacher
   _____5. Kindergarten Assistant Teacher
   _____6. First Grade Assistant Teacher

6. **Years of Experience in Teaching**
   _____1. 0-5
   _____2. 6-10
   _____3. 11-15
   _____4. 16-20
   _____5. 21-25
   _____6. Over 25

7. **Area(s) of Study in College**
   _____1. Early Childhood Major
   _____2. Early Childhood Minor
   _____3. Elementary Education
   _____4. Special Education
   _____5. Other (Specify)
   _____

8. **Which of the following best describes your school setting?**
   _____1. Urban
   _____2. Rural
   _____3. Suburban

Appendix B

Opinion on Literacy Instruction and Assessment

Directions: Please respond to the following items by circling the number that most nearly represents your **Personal Beliefs** about the importance of that item in a First Grade, Kindergarten, or Head Start Program.

1 **Strongly Disagree**	**2** **Disagree**	**3** **Neutral**	**4** **Agree**	**5** **Strongly Agree**

01.	Reading readiness is my primary literacy philosophy.	1 2 3 4 5
02.	Emergent literacy is my primary literacy philosophy.	1 2 3 4 5
03.	An important way to assess literacy is to have the child verbalize phonics rules.	1 2 3 4 5
04.	Story retelling is an important method for assessing comprehension.	1 2 3 4 5
05.	Initial assessment of beginning readers should focus on letter knowledge.	1 2 3 4 5
06.	Oral sequencing of story events is an essential method of assessing literacy.	1 2 3 4 5
07.	Children's memorization of poems and stories is an important support for reading progress.	1 2 3 4 5
08.	Directed listening/reading activities that involve interpretive thinking are appropriate for small group assessment.	1 2 3 4 5
09.	In an integrated curriculum, literacy can be assessed through any subject area.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	Children's early drawings are an important step toward writing.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	Children learn to read best when ability grouped.	1 2 3 4 5

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

12.	Correct recitation of the alphabet is essential to learning to read.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	The child's attempted reading of self-selected books is appropriate for ongoing assessment of reading progress.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	Until a child can spell accurately, the teacher should always correct the student's spelling.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	Reader's theater and author's circles are effective ways to assess a child's literacy growth.	1 2 3 4 5
16.	Standardized testing is an extremely appropriate way to determine early literacy development.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	Children's first lessons with reading should focus on letters and sounds.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	Invented spelling is an important stage in children's writing progress.	1 2 3 4 5
19.	Correct oral reading is a necessary component of a young child's literacy that needs to be assessed.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	Young readers' knowledge of new vocabulary words does not need to be assessed before they read a story.	1 2 3 4 5
21.	The child's recognition of alphabet letters is essential in determining literacy development.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	It is important to keep subject areas distinct and separate for purposes of instruction and assessment.	1 2 3 4 5

Knowledge Base - Terms

Directions: Check the following terms with which you are familiar.

1. ____ Reading recovery
2. ____ Emergent literacy
3. ____ Reading readiness
4. ____ Phonics
5. ____ Whole language
6. ____ Diphthong
7. ____ Portfolio assessment
8. ____ Structural analysis
9. ____ Writing conference
10. ____ Holistic reading instruction
11. ____ Syntax
12. ____ Semantic map/Web
13. ____ Word configuration
14. ____ Predictable books
15. ____ Subskills
16. ____ Authentic literacy instruction
17. ____ Print-rich environment
18. ____ Digraph
19. ____ Invented spelling
20. ____ Visual discrimination
21. ____ Big books
22. ____ Auditory discrimination
23. ____ Sight words
24. ____ Integrated curriculum
25. ____ Prefixes/Suffixes
26. ____ Environmental print
27. ____ Syllabication
28. ____ Print awareness
29. ____ Round Robin Reading
30. ____ Basal text

Knowledge Base - Theorists

Directions: Check the following names with whom you are familiar:

1. ____ Jean Piaget
2. ____ Lev Vygotsky
3. ____ Marie Clay
4. ____ Edward Dolch
5. ____ John Dewey
6. ____ Delores Durkin
7. ____ Jerome Harste
8. ____ Jean Chall
9. ____ Ken Goodman
10. ____ Mariane Frostig
11. ____ Dorothy Strickland
12. ____ Maria Montessori
13. ____ Leslie Morrow
14. ____ Edward Sipay
15. ____ Arthur Heilman

Teachers' Practice

Directions: Please indicate the extent to which you perform the activities listed below using the 5-point scale of 5 = to a very great extent and 1 = not at all.

1 Almost Never	2 Rarely (Monthly)	3 Sometimes (Weekly)	4 Regularly (2-4/Weeks)	5 Very Often (Daily)	
01.	I conduct literature circles.				1 2 3 4 5
02.	I teach reading through phonics lessons.				1 2 3 4 5
03.	I teach process writing (drafting, editing, publishing, conferencing)				1 2 3 4 5
04.	I use workbooks to reinforce reading skills.				1 2 3 4 5
05.	I assess reading by assessing isolated skills.				1 2 3 4 5
06.	I plan reading lessons using literature, not a basal text.				1 2 3 4 5
07.	I teach handwriting.				1 2 3 4 5
08.	My program practices screening testing.				1 2 3 4 5
09.	I practice portfolio assessment.				1 2 3 4 5
10.	I evaluate literacy during an integrated unit.				1 2 3 4 5
11.	I teach reading through skills drill.				1 2 3 4 5
12.	I use flash cards to reinforce vocabulary.				1 2 3 4 5
13.	I normally allow children to use invented spelling.				1 2 3 4 5
14.	I teach reading using hands-on classroom activities.				1 2 3 4 5
15.	My students practice Round Robin Reading.				1 2 3 4 5
16.	I use predictable books.				1 2 3 4 5
17.	I teach with a basal text.				1 2 3 4 5
18.	I plan and implement integrated units.				1 2 3 4 5